

Rick Warren Unloads on Robert Morris over Sexual Abuse

The fallout continues after Robert Morris resigned from Gateway Church over furor following allegations he molested a 12-year-old girl in the 1980s.

Prominent Christian author and retired pastor Rick Warren isn't mincing words in his condemnation of the reports about Morris. Warren posted to X saying, "I'm angry & disgusted to hear of Robert Morris' sexual abuse of a child & heartbroken for Cindy Clemishire. To sexually use a 12 yr old child, then continue it for yrs, is not merely an 'inappropriate relationship.' It's a crime. Sexual child abuse is an evil punishable by law. One can't just confess when caught & move on with no consequences."

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– Rick Warren (@RickWarren) June 21, 2024

Daystar Television Network announced this week that it had removed all of Morris' programming from its network, with Gateway Church elders separately launching an investigation into the claims against their former leader.

"We are deeply grieved and saddened by the recent and very serious allegations against Pastor Robert Morris involving the sexual abuse of a 12-year-old minor," Daystar said in a statement. "In light of these events and a recently released statement by Gateway's Elders, Daystar's leadership has made the decision to remove all of Pastor Robert Morris'

programming from our broadcasting schedule.”

A Statement from Daystar Television Network ☐☐

– Daystar Television (@Daystar) June 19, 2024

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Recapping What Unfolded

As CBN News previously reported, Morris, 62, who resigned from Gateway Tuesday, June 18, offered an initial statement on the allegations against him in which he again used the term “young lady.”

In that statement to The Christian Post, Morris described what he said was “inappropriate sexual behavior with a young lady” in a home he stayed in during his 20s. “It was kissing and petting and not intercourse, but it was wrong,” he said.

The preacher went on to state that the behavior happened on “several occasions” over a number of years. Morris said the situation was “brought to light” in 1987. He said he confessed, repented, sought counseling and returned to ministry two years later with the support of the victim’s father.

For the record, the accuser, Cindy Clemishire—now 54—has denied the latter claim.

“I submitted myself to the Elders of Shady Grove Church and the young lady’s father,” Morris said. “They asked me to step out of ministry and receive counseling and freedom ministry, which I did. Since that time, I have walked in purity and accountability in this area.”

This statement ignited a further firestorm after Clemishire and others pushed back on the language used and as additional

details about the allegations against Morris were revealed.

Elders at Gateway initially issued a statement addressing the claims made against Morris, pointedly referring to the preacher's "moral failure."

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"Pastor Robert has been open and forthright about a moral failure he had over 35 years ago when he was in his twenties and prior to him starting Gateway Church," the elders' first statement read. "He has shared publicly from the pulpit the proper Biblical steps he took in his lengthy restoration process."

The elders said the matter had been disclosed to church leaders.

However, after Morris resigned, the church said in a second statement that it did not previously know the scope or details of the allegations against the preacher.

"The elders' prior understanding was that Morris's extramarital relationship, which he had discussed many times throughout his ministry, was with 'a young lady' and not [the] abuse of a 12-year-old child," it read. "We are heartbroken and appalled by what has come to light over the past few days, and we express our deep sympathy to the victim and her family."

Clemishire has again disputed these claims, stating that she emailed Robert Morris' Gateway email address in 2005 and delivered details about the alleged crimes.

"Former Gateway elder, Tom Lane, received and responded to my email, acknowledging that the sexual abuse began on December 25, 1982, when I was 12 years old," she said in a statement

through attorney Boz Tchividjian, grandson of the late evangelist Billy Graham.

Clemishire continued, "Again in 2007, my then attorney Gentner Drummond (the current Attorney General of Oklahoma) sent a letter to Robert Morris with the hope that he would help reimburse me for the thousands of dollars I had expended in counseling as a result of this abuse. His attorney acknowledged the dates as well and then attempted to blame me for the abuse."

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